

Docket No. 0505-1242P

Appl. No. 10/649,836

Amendment dated May 11, 2005

Reply to Office Action of December 23, 2004

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REMARKS

Claims 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 22, 27-31 and 33-44 are now pending in the present application. Claims 3, 4, 22, 28 and 33-35 have been amended, claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17-21, 23-26 and 32 have been canceled and claims 37-44 have been added. Claims 3, 4, 27 and 33 are independent. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Reasons For Entry of Amendments

The present amendments should be entered into the official file in view of the fact that the amendments to the claims automatically place the application into condition for allowance. In the alternative, if the Examiner does not believe that the application is in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner enter the amendments for the purposes of appeal. The amendments to the claims simplify the issues on appeal by amending the claims to recite subject matter that has been considered by the Examiner to define the present invention over the prior art relied on by the Examiner.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Mengoli, U.S. Patent No. 6,539,923. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

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At the outset, it is respectfully pointed out that claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17-21, 23-26 and 32 have been canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. In view of this, the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) has been rendered moot with regard to these claims. Applicants reserve the right to file a Continuation Application directed to these claims at a later date if it is so desired. In the Examiner's Advisory Action dated April 27, 2005, the Examiner indicated that claims 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 22, 27-31 and 33-36 would be allowable if submitted in a separate, timely filed amendment canceling the non-allowable claims. As the Examiner will note, in order to expedite prosecution, all of the claims that the Examiner considers to be "non-allowable" have been canceled. Therefore, claims 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 22, 27-31 and 33-36 should be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) are respectfully requested.

Additional Claims

Additional claims 37-44 have been added for the Examiner's consideration. In the Examiner's Advisory Action dated April 27, 2005, the Examiner indicated that claims 37-44 would be allowable if submitted in a separate, timely filed amendment canceling the non-allowable claims. Since all of the "non-allowable" claims have been canceled, claims 37-44 should be in condition for allowance.

Favorable consideration and allowance of additional claims 37-44 are respectfully requested.

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CONCLUSION

Since the remaining references cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but merely to show the state-of- the-art, no further comments are deemed necessary with respect thereto.

All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn.

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

Applicants respectfully petition under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) and § 1.17 for a two-month extension of time in which to respond to the Examiner's Office Action. The Extension of Time Fee for the 1st month extension of time in the amount of \$120.00 was paid with the Amendment dated March 31, 2005. Accordingly, a check in the amount of \$330.00 is attached hereto.

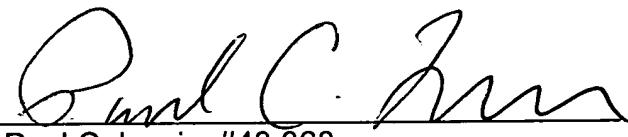
In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Paul C. Lewis, Registration No. 43,368 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

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If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 
Paul C. Lewis, #43,368

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000

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